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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [PGOV](#) [ER](#) [SU](#)  
SUBJECT: EASTERN FRONT NEGOTIATIONS CONCLUDING

REF: ASMARA 802

Classified By: CDA Jennifer A. McIntyre, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: The Eastern Front and Government of National Unity (GNU) initialed the power sharing agreement on October 9. Only the implementation modalities need to be finalized and these are expected to be resolved by October 13. The Eastern Front successfully secured a significant number of governmental positions, including an assistant and advisor to President Bashir, but the issue of one region was sidelined pending a GNU-proposed national conference on federalism. The Eastern Front and other sources claim that the eastern Sudan agreement will be signed October 14. President Bashir, Vice-President Kiir and the presidents of Yemen and Djibouti are rumored to be attending. End Summary.

¶2. (C) On October 9, the Eastern Front and GNU reached agreement on the power-sharing arrangements and initialed the draft agreement. Specifically, on the federal level, the Eastern Front will get an assistant to the president, an advisor to the president, one state minister, and ten national parliament MPs. The Eastern Front, as well as other observers, were surprised that they were given both positions of advisor and assistant to the president. It is rumored that Rashaida Free Lions (RFL) leader Mabrouk Mubarak will take the position of Advisor to President Bashir and that the GNU has asked that the position of Assistant to President Bashir be taken by Beja Congress leader Dr. Amna Dirar. Dr. Dirar has not decided at this stage whether she will accept the position. (Comment: Given Dr. Dirar's leadership role in the Eastern Front, her departure would present an added challenge in the future development of a strong Eastern Front party. End Comment.)

¶3. (C) On the regional level, the Eastern Front did not gain any governor (Walis) positions, but were given a deputy governor position in Kassala and Gederaf, with the deputy governor position in Port Sudan remaining a Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) post. The Eastern Front also secured

three advisor positions in each of the regions and nine commissioners. On the local level - which is where many feel they fared the best - the Eastern Front was allocated five out of eleven slots in each of the 24 (or 25) local councils in the three states. Given that the local councils have the most direct contact with communities, this is where some Sudan experts believe the Eastern Front could have the most impact, especially as they try to transform themselves into a political party over the next two years leading up to national elections.

¶4. (C) The Eastern Front not only did not achieve their goal of one state for eastern Sudan, they also failed to get a coordinating body for eastern Sudan. Instead, the GNU held its ground, fearing that if a precedent of one state was struck in the east, it would need to follow suit in Darfur. As detailed in reftel, the GNU has agreed to a national conference on federalism to be held in the next year, although GNU negotiators would not confirm dates or times. The GNU presented the position that it must first tackle the problems of Darfur before moving onto a national conference. After the conference is held, the GNU agreed it would then hold a national referendum on whether to return to a federal Sudan. Some experts, such as Dr. Taisir Ali fear that the Eastern Front's failure to get details from the GNU now may mean a lack of commitment to such a proposal in the future.

¶5. (C) Currently, the Eastern Front and GNU are working out the implementation modalities. Specifically, they are focusing on a mechanism for oversight of the wealth-sharing fund, oversight over the security arrangement and implementation of the overall agreement, anticipated to be completed by the end of the week. The signing of the Eastern Front/GNU agreement is planned for Saturday, October 14. President Isaias, President Bashir, Vice-President Kiir, the presidents of Yemen and Djibouti as well as senior Arab League representatives are expected to attend the signing. (Comment: Post predicts the U.S. Embassy and other Western diplomatic missions will receive last-minute invitations. End Comment.)

¶6. (C) Following the signing, the Eastern Front plans to hold a conference in Tesseney, Eritrea from October 30 until November 5, to work out their next steps and implementation of the agreement in eastern Sudan. On November 8 and 9, the Eastern Front leadership will take part in an European Commission (EC) sponsored training in Asmara, led by Dr. Taisir Ali of the Peacebuilding Center in the Horn of Africa (PCHA), focused on preparing the leadership for returning to positions in Khartoum and eastern Sudan. The EC plans to bring Sudanese experts from Khartoum to discuss key areas of concern, such as changes in the constitution, legislature and politics over the last decade. That training will be followed by a longer three-week course also sponsored by the EC and run by PCHA focused on approximately 40 individuals who will be taking positions in the local councils.

¶7. (C) Comment: Post is pleasantly surprised by the number of positions conceded to the Eastern Front in the power-sharing agreement, especially at the presidential and local levels. This level of representation could provide the opportunity for the Eastern Front to transform itself into a sustainable political entity, if the right support and training are provided. The next few weeks will be instrumental in getting the Eastern Front ready for implementation of the agreement and building their organization into a viable entity before national elections. Proposed USG-funded programs could effectively build on the EC's immediate-term training by focusing on longer-term capacity-building needs. Post will provide a more detailed training proposal by e-mail to AF/SPG and Embassy Khartoum. End Comment.

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